

SPAWN

No. 225 DIGITAL EDITION



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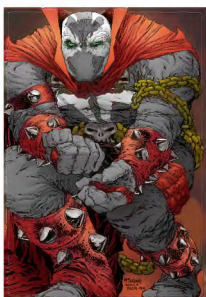
SPAWN



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PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN

Spawn (Jim Downing) and Richard continue their interrogation of The Agent, revealing new truths about the man Jim was before his coma – the mysterious Director Kramer.

Even as Jim is finally discovering the reality of his past life, Richard begins to note that the dark powers Jim wields as Spawn seem to be increasing in their influence.

In a unique turn, Richard's true allegiance is revealed, as Jason Wynn prepares to make his final move.



Jim Downing (Spawn) – A man whose past is shrouded in mystery, and connected intimately to the very fabric of the *Spawn* mythos, Jim is the world's newest Hellspawn... and so much more. Having spent years in a deep coma, Jim's main drive is piecing together the fragments of the man he was, in an effort to discover the man he truly is.



Director Kramer – Before Jim Downing woke from his coma in *Spawn* #185 he lead a completely different life – was a completely different man, with a different name, different physical appearance and quite possibly sinister motivations driven by unchecked ambition. Director Kramer ran the clandestine government program, RAGNOROK and, unknowingly had a hand in crafting some of the darker aspects of the *Spawn* universe.



The Program – A clandestine military operation with deep-rooted ties to events from throughout *Spawn*'s 20-year existence. Hidden within the secrets of The Program, also known as Project: RAGNOROK, lies the truth Jim seeks, and the dark heart of a past better left buried.



Richard Masullo (Tremor) – Transformed into the hulking monster known as Tremor by the same clandestine government program that Jim Downing once oversaw, Richard is a man on a mission, crossing the country to confront Jim about their shared past – but is he friend or foe?



Jason Wynn – At one time considered to be among the most powerful men on the planet, Jason Wynn ran a number of covert government programs with far-reaching influence, before his shocking and sudden fall from grace. Wynn's connection to the events surrounding Jim Downing's "rebirth" further cement his role as a master manipulator.

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image

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PRODUCTIONS
SPAWN.COM

THE PROLOGUE:

17 DAYS EARLIER.

YOU'RE
A FOOL,
DOWNING...!

DOWNING'S
GONE,
MALEBOLGIA.
I SENT HIM
AWAY!

IT'S JUST
ME NOW... YOUR
SYMBIOTE! AND
SINCE I WAS THE ONE
THAT PUT YOUR EVIL
INSIDE FREAK'S
BODY--I CAN TEAR
IT BACK OUT!

LIKE
THIS!

I SENT
FREAK TO HELL! NOT
YOU!! **THAT MAKES ME HIS
MASTER!!** YOUR MISTAKE
WASN'T FINDING OUT WHY HIS
SOUL WAS SENT THERE BEFORE
USING IT! BUT TONIGHT IT ENDS!!
THIS ALL ENDS!!

YOU
AREN'T
GOING TO
RULE THIS
WORLD!

AND
NEITHER IS
CLOWN!

JIM
DOWNING'S
JUST A
MEANS TO
GET THERE.

HEEHEE... THAT'S
FUNNY... YOU CAN'T HURT
ANY OF US. NOT ME.
NOT GOD... AND ESPECIALLY
NOT DOWNING. BECAUSE
IF YOU DO... HE'LL
COME BACK.

SIMMONS
WILL COME BACK
LOOKING FOR YOU...

HAHAHAHeehaheee



THEN LET
HIM COME!



LET 'EM
ALL COME!!
BECAUSE NO ONE
IS GOING TO STOP
THIS SPAWN EVER
AGAIN!*

* See issues 218 and 219
for the full story--TODD.



Minutes later.



SORRY
I HAD TO
BAIL ON YOU,
DOWNING. I
NEEDED TO GET
SOMETHING
IMPORTANT.



SOME-
THING
MALEBOLGIA
NEEDS
BADLY.





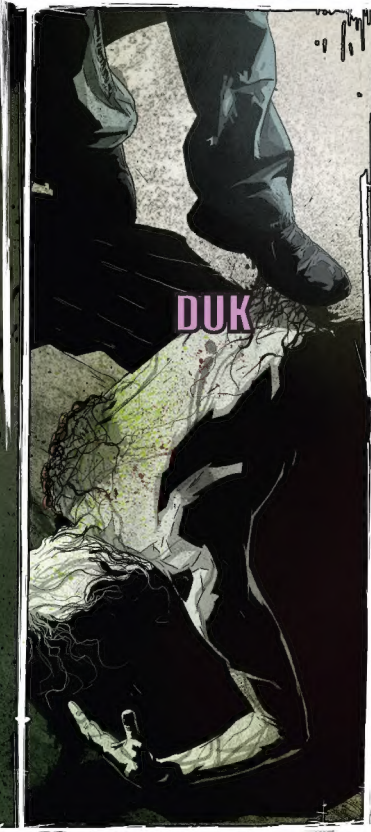
unh?

WHERE'D
THEY...
GO...?

ARE YOU
KIDDING
ME?



HAHAHA



DUK



ARE YOU
KIDDING
ME?!!




HAHeeHeeHAHAHAHAHA



ALL THOSE
YEARS OF HIDING.
OF PLANNING-- BECAUSE
I THOUGHT WHEN YOU
FINALLY RETURNED NONE
OF US WOULD BE SAFE!
THAT YOUR WRATH
AND ANGER WOULD
FIND US ALL!

BUT THIS?
I MEAN... I KNEW
YOU'D SCATTERED
YOUR POWERS-- BUT
I HAD NO IDEA HOW
WEAKENED YOU MUST
HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN
IN THAT BODY!

OBTAINING
NEITHER DID
YOU.



AND TO
THINK THE YEARS I
WASTED-- BECAUSE
I WAS AFRAID
OF YOU.

PATHETIC.

ABSOLUTELY
PATHETIC!

CLOWN...

IT'S BEEN
A LONG TIME,
HASN'T IT?

COG?!

NO WAY!
YOU'RE NOT REAL...
THERE'S NO WAY YOU'RE
INVOLVED IN ALL THIS, TOO!
SOMEONE'S JUST MESSING
WITH ME NOW.

SORRY TO
DISAPPOINT
YOU-- BUT
IT'S ME.

AND I'VE
SEEN YOU'VE
INTRODUCED YOURSELF
TO THIS LATEST SPAWN.
HOPING HE'D-- WHAT?
FALL FOR YOUR TRICKS?
OR THAT HE'D JOIN
FORCES WITH YOU
EVENTUALLY?

THAT'S NOT
GOING TO
HAPPEN!

BECAUSE
HE'S NOT
YOURS TO
CONTROL!

NOT A
WEAPON THAT
POWERFUL.

SCREW
YOU, COG! I'VE
WAITED TOO
LONG FOR
THIS!

SO
HAVE
I!!

IF YOU THINK
THINGS JUST GOT EASIER
FOR YOU BECAUSE
MALEBOLGIA'S DISAPPEARED
-- *THINK TWICE!* AND STOP
DELUDING YOURSELF INTO
THINKING YOU'LL EVER BE
ANYTHING *OTHER* THAN THE
SECOND RATE SERVANT
YOU ALREADY ARE!

SO HERE'S
A FRIENDLY
WARNING...

STARTING
NOW-- YOU'RE NOT
GOING TO CONTACT
DOWNING AGAIN. IS
THAT CLEAR?

GET YOUR
HANDS OFF
ME, OLD
MAN!

SEE-- I'VE
GOT NEWS FOR
YOU. I DON'T KNOW
WHERE YOU'VE BEEN
HIDING-- BUT YOU'VE
BEEN GONE TOO
LONG... BECAUSE
THINGS HAVE
CHANGED!

SO
HAVE I,
CLOWN... SO
HAVE I.

Chapter One: The REMAINS

SUPPOSEDLY... THIS IS WHERE IT STARTED. AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT I WAS TOLD BY THOSE I WAS 'QUESTIONING'. AND THEY WEREN'T IN ANY POSITION TO BE LYING TO ME.

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING-- THAT THIS IS 'THE PROJECT'?

I'M NOT. NO.

THIS WAS JUST THE PETRI DISH WHERE THINGS GREW OUT OF. A HUGE LAB BUILT ON TOP OF AN OLD MILITARY INSTALLATION WHERE THEY COULD MONITOR THE RESULTS OF SOME OF THEIR 'TESTS' BY SEEING HOW THE PATIENTS WOULD LIVE AND REACT IN A NORMAL ENVIRONMENT.

THIS WAS JUST AN EXTENSION OF THEIR SICK WARFARE RESEARCH THAT EVENTUALLY GAVE SOMEONE THE IDEA THAT HUMANS COULD NOT ONLY BE CULTIVATED AND PERFECTED...

BUT BUILT.

ARE YOU RELIGIOUS, RICHARD?



um...

yeah.
sure.

WHAT'S
THAT GOT
TO DO WITH
ANYTHING?



MAYBE
NOTHING.
MAYBE
EVERYTHING.
I DON'T
KNOW.

I'M JUST TRYING
TO FIGURE A FEW THINGS
OUT... BECAUSE I'VE BEEN
TOLD SOME WEIRD SHIT
SINCE I AWOKE FROM
MY COMA.

LIKE
WHAT?

LIKE WHERE MY
SOUL WENT DURING THE
COMA. SO I'M CURIOUS-- DID
YOU EVER *DIE*-- EVEN FOR A
FEW SECONDS? OR DO YOU
KNOW IF YOUR HEART EVER
STOPPED FOR A COUPLE
OF BEATS?



NOT THAT
I KNOW OF, BUT
I CAN'T SWEAR
TO THAT.

THEY DID
SO MANY
EXPERIMENTS AND
PUMPED ME WITH SO
MANY DRUGS--
I PROBABLY ONLY
REMEMBER HALF OF
WHAT THEY DID
TO ME.

THERE'RE
DEFINITELY GAPS
IN MY MEMORY.
FOR SURE.



WHY? IS
SOMETHING
WRONG?
IT'S NOT
YOUR HEART,
IS IT?

NO!
THAT'S
NOT
IT.

HANG ON A
SEC... I DON'T MEAN
TO INTERRUPT, BUT THAT
LOOKS LIKE ONE OF THE
MILITARY BUNKERS I'VE
HEARD OF. WE SHOULD
CHECK IT OUT.

NOW,
YOU WERE
SAYING...?

LOOK-- THIS
IS GOING TO
SOUND CRAZY-- BUT
IF ANYONE WILL
UNDERSTAND--
IT'S YOU.

SOMEONE TOLD ME
THAT I TRIED TO KILL GOD.*
OR AT LEAST MY SOUL DID. AND
BECAUSE OF THAT, MY SOUL WAS
SENT TO HELL, WHICH IS WHERE
THIS COSTUME COMES FROM.
THEN NOT LONG AGO I
SPROUTED... WINGS!






HUGE,
GLOWING BLUE
WINGS! AND THE
POWER IT GAVE ME WAS...
UNBELIEVABLE! WHICH
CONSIDERING WHAT I
CAN DO AS SPAWN--
IMAGINE WHAT THAT
FELT LIKE!




I...
DON'T
KNOW WHAT
TO SAY.

IS IT
POSSIBLE?
I GUESS. AT THIS
POINT NOTHING
WOULD SURPRISE ME.
BUT IF YOU'RE ASKING
IF I KNEW OF ANY
'RESURRECTIONS'?
THE ANSWER'S
NO.



BUT GIVEN WHAT
I'VE SEEN YOUR POWER
DO ON TV-- YOU SOMEHOW
BEING **'TOUCHED BY GOD'**
WOULDN'T COME AS A
GREAT SHOCK. THE MEDIA'S
ALREADY CALLING
YOU A MESSIAH.

SO-- YOU
TELL ME YOU
THINK YOU'VE BEEN
TO HEAVEN-- THAT
SOUNDS A WHOLE
LOT BETTER THAN
THE HELL I WAS
LIVING HERE ON
EARTH!



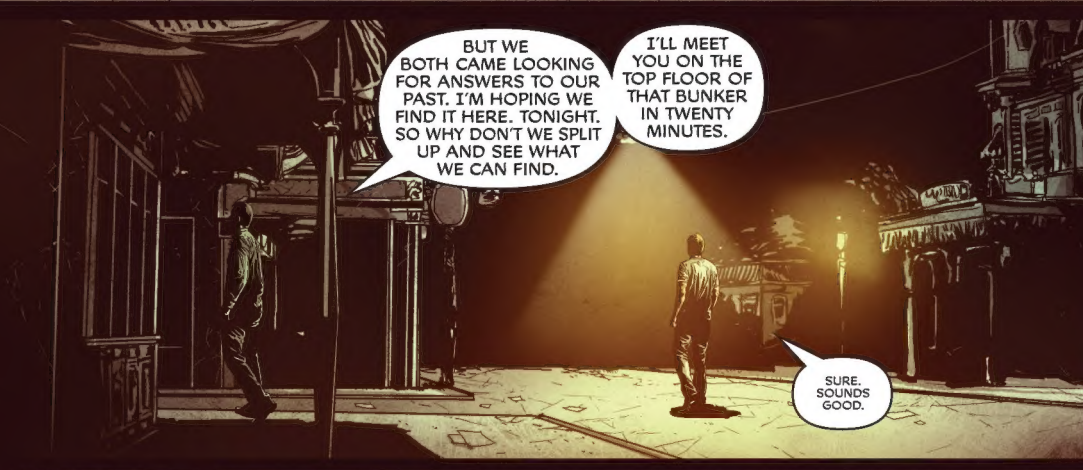
I WASN'T
TOLD I WAS
WANTED THERE...
THEY SAID I TRIED
TO **KILL** GOD!

WHAT
THE HELL
DOES THAT
MEAN?

AND EVEN
MORE
BIZARRE-- AS
FAR AS I KNOW
I'M NOT EVEN
RELIGIOUS.



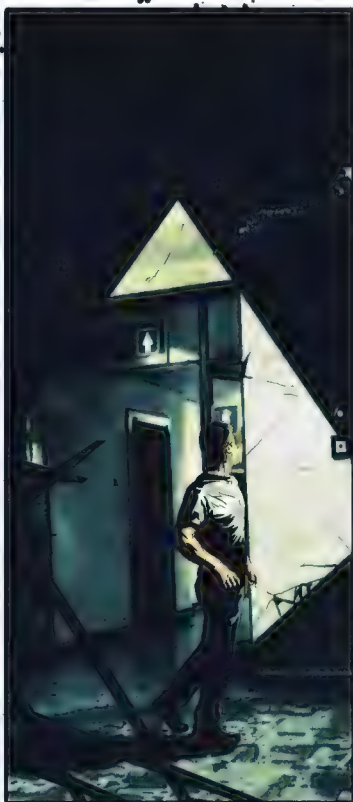
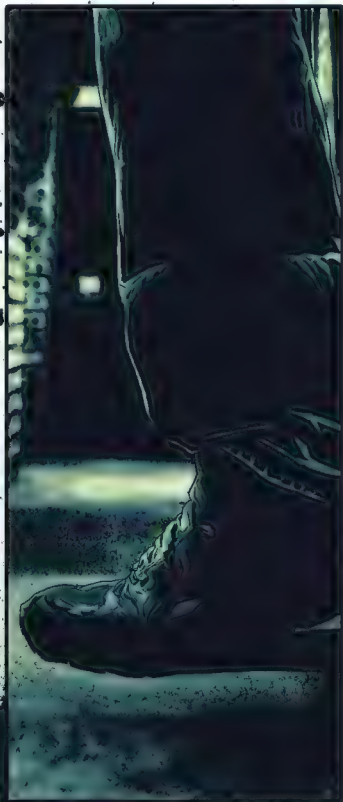
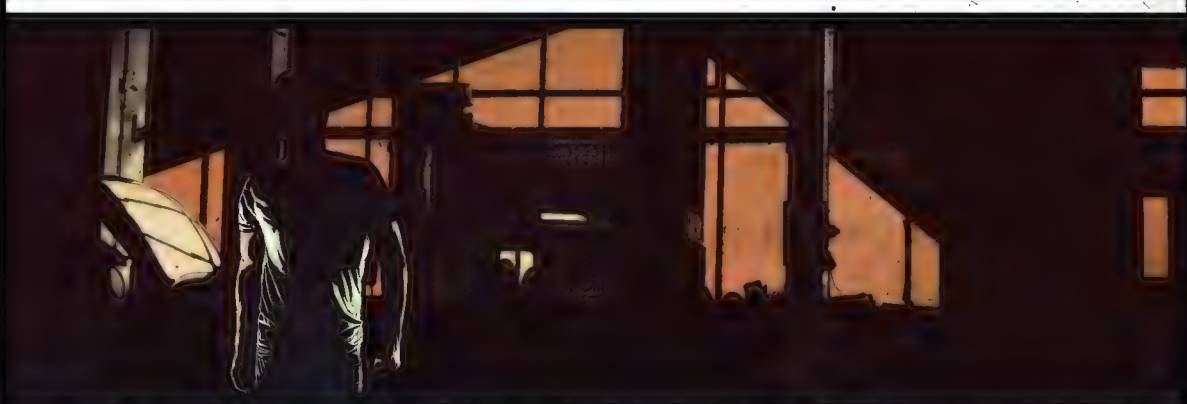
JIM...
I WISH I
COULD HELP
YOU WITH
THAT. I
CAN'T.

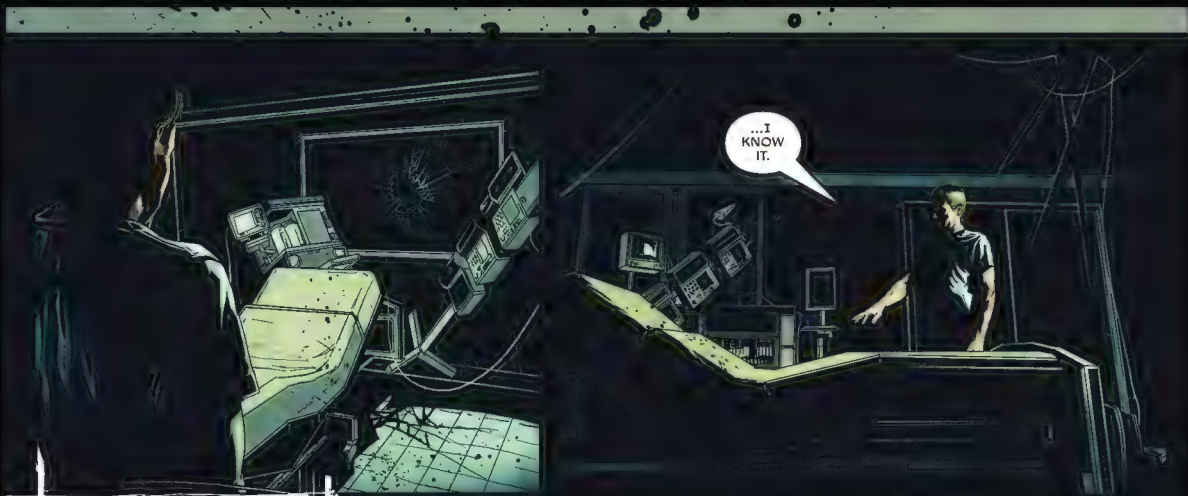


BUT WE
BOTH CAME LOOKING
FOR ANSWERS TO OUR
PAST. I'M HOPING WE
FIND IT HERE. TONIGHT.
SO WHY DON'T WE SPLIT
UP AND SEE WHAT
WE CAN FIND.

I'LL MEET
YOU ON THE
TOP FLOOR OF
THAT BUNKER
IN TWENTY
MINUTES.

SURE.
SOUNDS
GOOD.





...I
KNOW
IT.



I'VE
BEEN HERE
BEFORE.

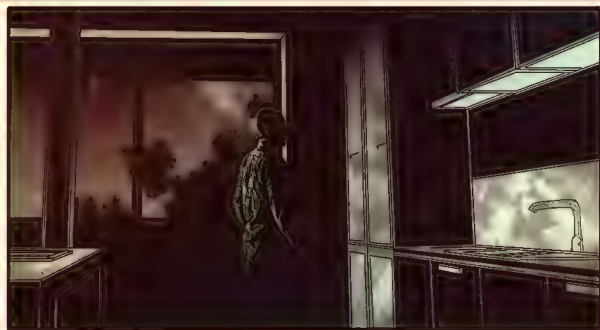
THIS IS
WHERE I
WATCHED... WHILE
THEY WERE
WORKING ON
THEM.

WHERE
I GAVE
THE ORDERS
THAT HELPED
CREATE
THEM.



IT...
WAS
ME!

Chapter Two: The CONSPIRACY



DAMN
IT!

THERE
HAS TO BE
MORE FILES
THAN
THESE.


WHAT'RE
YOU
DOING...?

A close-up, high-contrast image of a man's face, likely Wynn. He has a beard and is looking directly at the viewer with a serious, intense expression. The lighting is dramatic, with deep shadows and bright highlights on his face.


WYNN!

I THOUGHT
YOU WERE MEETING
ME IN THE
OBSERVATORY?


I WAS...
I'M JUST DOING
MY PART. ACTING
LIKE I'M AN
INTRUDER.

A wide shot of an observatory interior. On the left, a large window with a grid pattern looks out onto a bright, hazy sky. A man stands near the window. In the center, there is a bookshelf filled with books. On the right, another man stands with his back to the camera, looking towards the first man. The room is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the window.


THEN YOU'RE
DOING A CONVINCING
JOB. BECAUSE TO ME IT
LOOKED LIKE YOU WERE
SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING.
I ADMIRE THE DEPTH
YOU'VE TAKEN IN YOUR
NEW ROLE.

A close-up of Wynn's face, looking slightly to the side with a thoughtful or intense expression.


I'M SURE IT'S
BEEN VERY HARD ON YOU--
BUT YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN
AWARE HOW MUCH WE REGARD
LOYALTY. YOURS, SO FAR, HAS
BEEN IMPECCABLE. DESPITE
THE RATHER COMPLICATED
SITUATIONS YOU'VE BEEN
INVOLVED IN.

A close-up of Wynn's face, looking directly at the viewer with a slight smile or smirk.

I UNDERSTAND
MY LIFE! I DON'T
NEED ONE OF YOUR
LECTURES.

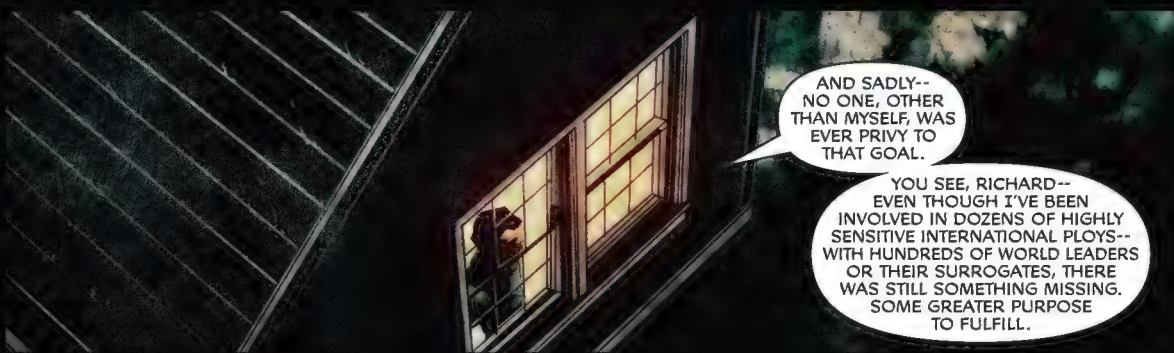
A close-up of the other man's face, shown in profile, looking towards Wynn.

YOU'RE
QUITE RIGHT.
FOR BOTH OF US
IT'S FAR TOO
LATE FOR THAT,
ISN'T IT?

A close-up of the other man's face, shown in profile, looking towards Wynn.

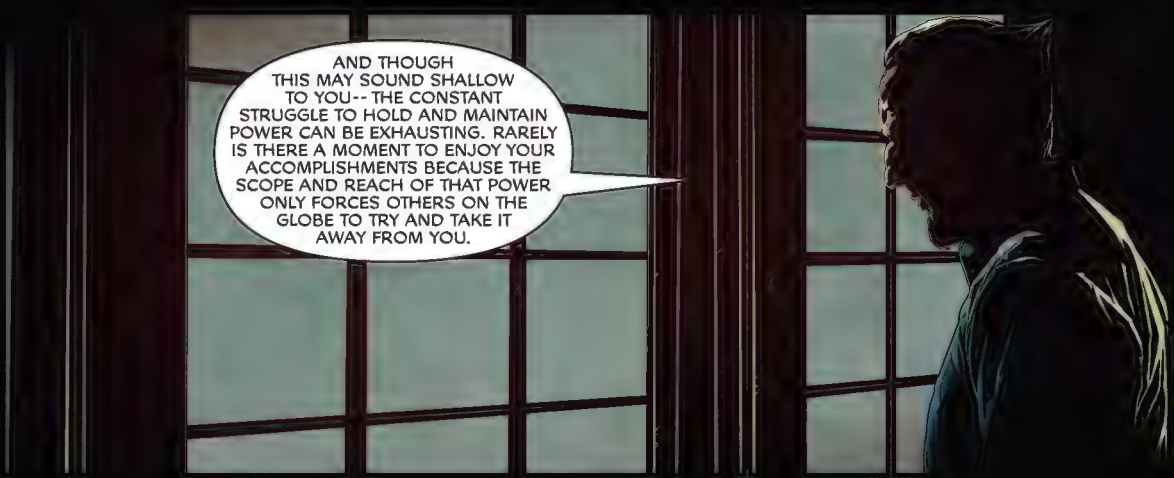


BUT WHETHER YOU
KNOW IT OR NOT-- YOU'VE
DONE US *BOTH* A FAVOR WITH
YOUR ACTIONS. YOU'RE GETTING THE
NECESSARY ANSWERS YOU REQUIRE.
WHILE I'M FINALLY IN A POSITION
TO ACCOMPLISH MY ONE
TRUE GOAL.



AND SADLY--
NO ONE, OTHER
THAN MYSELF, WAS
EVER PRIVY TO
THAT GOAL.

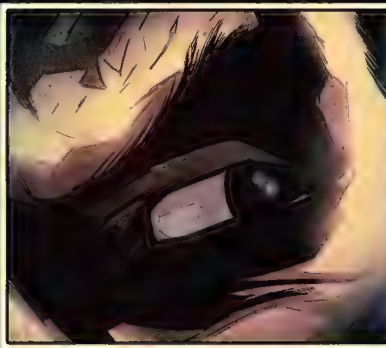
YOU SEE, RICHARD--
EVEN THOUGH I'VE BEEN
INVOLVED IN DOZENS OF HIGHLY
SENSITIVE INTERNATIONAL PLOYS--
WITH HUNDREDS OF WORLD LEADERS
OR THEIR SURROGATES, THERE
WAS STILL SOMETHING MISSING.
SOME GREATER PURPOSE
TO FULFILL.



AND THOUGH
THIS MAY SOUND SHALLOW
TO YOU-- THE CONSTANT
STRUGGLE TO HOLD AND MAINTAIN
POWER CAN BE EXHAUSTING. RARELY
IS THERE A MOMENT TO ENJOY YOUR
ACCOMPLISHMENTS BECAUSE THE
SCOPE AND REACH OF THAT POWER
ONLY FORCES OTHERS ON THE
GLOBE TO TRY AND TAKE IT
AWAY FROM YOU.

THINK ABOUT
YOUR OWN STRUGGLES.
TRYING TO ACCEPT LIVING
AS THE CREATURE CALLED
'TREMOR', THEN FINDING
LATER THERE MAY BE ANOTHER
ALTERNATIVE. BUT TO GET
THERE YOU MIGHT HAVE TO
SACRIFICE YOUR POWER
KNOWING IT CAN BE
USED AS A FORCE
OF GOOD.

SO WHICH PATH
DO YOU CHOOSE?
WE BOTH KNOW
THERE'S ONLY ONE
ANSWER.



IT'S THE
PATH THAT
BRINGS
INNER
PEACE.





NOW
WE'RE BOTH
SO VERY
CLOSE TO
THAT END.



CAN'T
YOU FEEL
IT?



FEEL
WHAT?

OH COME,
RICHARD! WE'VE
BOTH BEEN AROUND
HIM TOO LONG TO NOT
KNOW WHEN HE'S CLOSE.
WHEN HIS SHADOW
HAS MERGED WITH
OUR OWN.

MAKING
THE AIR
TAKE ON A
SLIGHT CHILL, SO
THE HAIR ON
OUR NECKS
RISE.

IT'S ALL SO
SEDUCTIVE.



AND
IT'S ALL SO
VERY,
VERY...



PREDICTABLE!



THAT'S
IT! DIRECT
YOUR ANGER
AT ME!

FOCUS
ON ME.

KR
AK

SPAWN!
IT'S NOT
WHAT IT
LOOKS LIKE!
I CAN
EXPLAIN!

EXPLAIN
WHAT? THAT
YOU'VE
BETRAYED
ME?!

YOU'LL SHUT
YOUR MOUTH
IF YOU KNOW
WHAT'S GOOD
FOR YOU!



BECAUSE
MR. WYNN
AND I NEED
TO HAVE
A LITTLE
'CHAT'!



YES OR NO--
DOES RICHARD
WORK FOR
YOU?

DEPENDS
ON YOUR
PERSPECTIVE.

YES!
OR
NO!

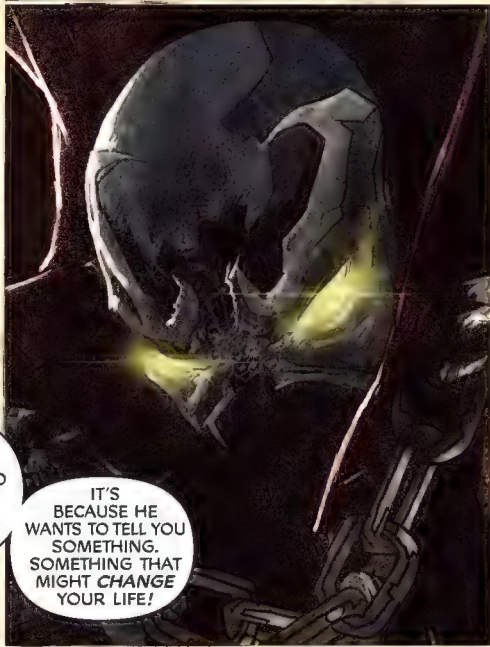
Gasp!



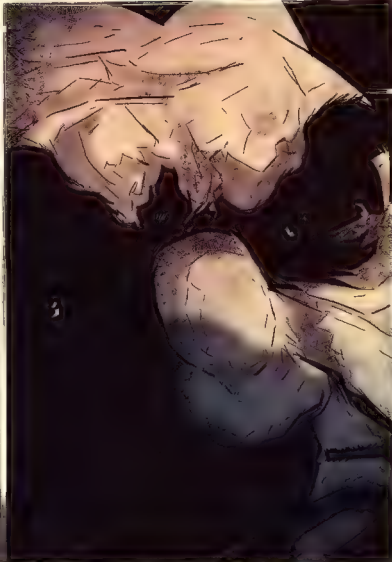
STOP IT!
YOU'RE
KILLING
HIM!

WE NEED
HIM ALIVE! SO...
THE ANSWER IS
YES! I MADE
A DEAL WITH
WYNN.


BUT ONLY
BECAUSE HE
SEEMED TO WANT
TO GET NEAR YOU SO
BADLY! BUT WHY?!
HE KNOWS YOU'VE
GOT THE POWER
TO KILL HIM!



IT'S
BECAUSE HE
WANTS TO TELL YOU
SOMETHING.
SOMETHING THAT
MIGHT CHANGE
YOUR LIFE!



THAT'S
WHY I DID
THIS... NOT TO
TRICK YOU, BUT
TO GET YOU
ANSWERS!



THEN SELFISHLY...
I WAS HOPING TO
GET *MY ANSWERS* TOO!
BECAUSE SO FAR I
HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO DO
THAT ANY BETTER THAN
YOU-- AND THIS WAS THE
ONLY WAY I COULD THINK
OF TO FINALLY
GET THEM.

LIAR!

WHY? WHY
WOULD I LIE TO
YOU? MY POWERS
ARE GONE-- YOU
TOOK THOSE.

SO IF YOU
WANT TO HURT ME...
THERE'S NOT A *DAMN*
THING I CAN DO TO STOP IT!
BUT I'M TELLING YOU, SPAWN--
WYNN HAS INFORMATION
YOU WANT. AT LEAST GET
THAT BEFORE YOU SNUFF
HIM OUT.

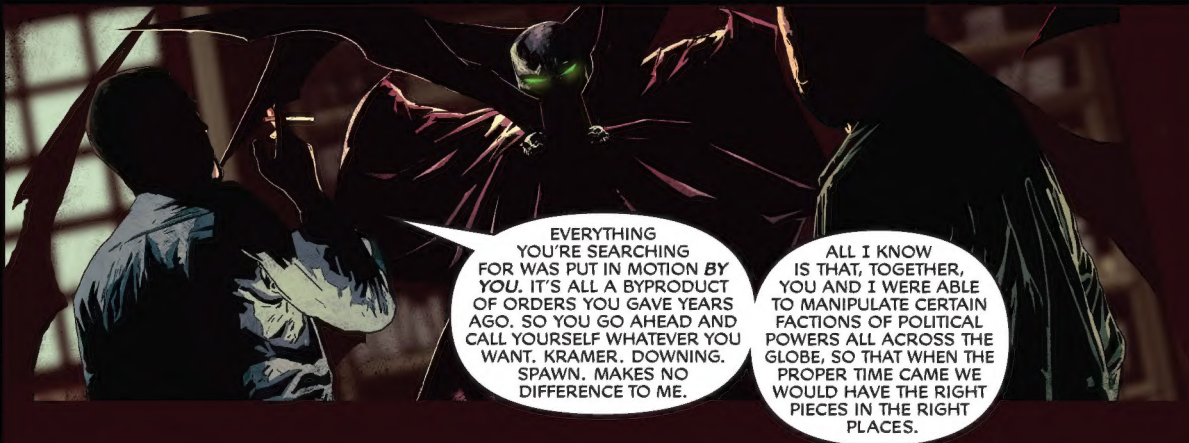
THUMP

koff

koff

THANKS,
RICHARD...
I OWE YOU
ONE.

NOW WHY
DON'T WE
CUT RIGHT
TO THE
CHASE.



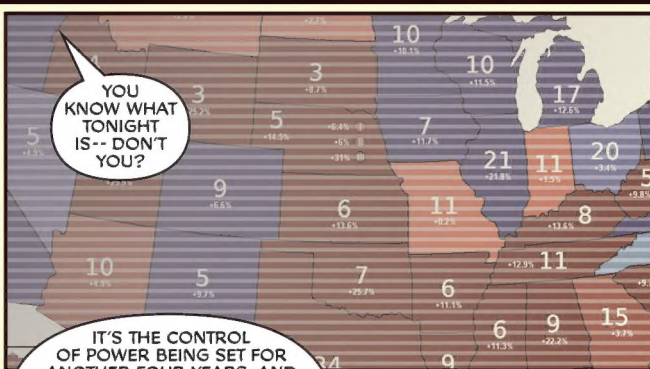
EVERYTHING YOU'RE SEARCHING FOR WAS PUT IN MOTION BY YOU. IT'S ALL A BYPRODUCT OF ORDERS YOU GAVE YEARS AGO. SO YOU GO AHEAD AND CALL YOURSELF WHATEVER YOU WANT. KRAMER. DOWNING. SPAWN. MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO ME.

ALL I KNOW IS THAT, TOGETHER, YOU AND I WERE ABLE TO MANIPULATE CERTAIN FACTIONS OF POLITICAL POWERS ALL ACROSS THE GLOBE, SO THAT WHEN THE PROPER TIME CAME WE WOULD HAVE THE RIGHT PIECES IN THE RIGHT PLACES.



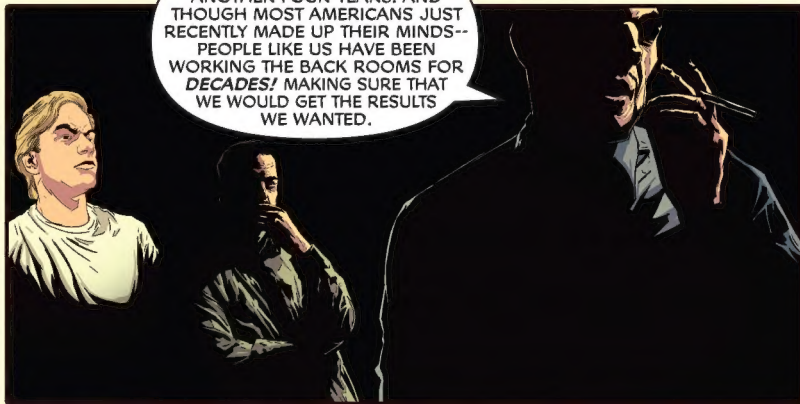
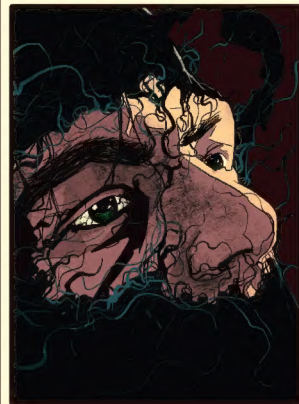
HERE... LET ME SHOW YOU.

CLIK



YOU KNOW WHAT TONIGHT IS-- DON'T YOU?

IT'S THE CONTROL OF POWER BEING SET FOR ANOTHER FOUR YEARS. AND THOUGH MOST AMERICANS JUST RECENTLY MADE UP THEIR MINDS-- PEOPLE LIKE US HAVE BEEN WORKING THE BACK ROOMS FOR *DECADES!* MAKING SURE THAT WE WOULD GET THE RESULTS WE WANTED.



I DON'T CARE WHO ELSE YOU'VE CONNED ALONG THE WAY. THIS IS ABOUT YOU AND I. NOT ANYONE ELSE!


THAT'S NOT HOW THIS WORKS-- AND YOU KNOW IT! SINCE MOST OF THE MISSION'S MODEL WAS BASED ON RECOMMENDATIONS BY YOU.



YOU WERE
SO EAGER TO BRING
THOSE HIGH RANKING
CONNECTIONS OF YOURS
ON BOARD-- BECAUSE YOU
KNEW THEY WANTED
THE SAME THINGS
YOU DID.

MONEY.
POWER.
FAME.

I REMEMBER
HOW YOU USED TO
LAUGH BEHIND THEIR
BACKS-- AT HOW EASILY THEY
TRADED THEIR INTEGRITY FOR
A CHANCE TO BE CLOSE TO
THE ACTION. AND TONIGHT...
THE CULMINATION OF ALL
THAT PLANNING FINALLY
BEARS FRUIT.



SO, YOU WANT
TO STAND THERE AND
TELL ME YOU'RE ONLY
CONCERNED ABOUT YOURSELF.
THAT'S FINE. UNFORTUNATELY,
THE REALITY IS OUR FINAL
PIECE HAS JUST BEEN PUT IN
PLACE AND THE OBAMA
CAMP WAS ALWAYS MORE
THAN WILLING TO
JOIN US.

Next:
AMERICA TURNS BLUE





Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE